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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**MARYLAND ENERGY ADMINISTRATION TO OFFER \$700,000
TO SPUR EARLY OFFSHORE WIND INVESTMENTS**

MEA's Market Entry Program is designed to appeal to new market entrants and generate wind energy innovation.

ANNAPOLIS (March 18, 2014) - Today the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) announced the launch of an innovative program aimed at supporting state-of-the-art and pioneering business development in the state of Maryland. The Market Entry Assistance Grant Program is the first initiative to originate from the Offshore Wind Business Development Fund, and is designed to help Maryland businesses become integral participants in the global offshore wind market. MEA intends to issue grants to support immediate rollout of emerging businesses products and services throughout the state, and facilitate development of specific business opportunities within the offshore wind sector. This grant program will spur industrial innovation and growth of Maryland businesses, including minority businesses, seeking their first entry into the offshore wind market.

According to Abigail Ross Hopper, Director of Maryland Energy Administration, this ground-breaking program is the result of the Business Development Fund's Advisory Committee's recommendations which will aid in job creation and provide greater opportunities throughout the State for emerging businesses, including minority owned emerging businesses.

Under this program, a Maryland emerging business that is ready to enter the global offshore wind market is eligible to apply for grant funds. The funds are aimed to reduce the costs associated with establishing commercial offshore wind sector exports. This program will provide two types of grant assistance. Administrative Costs Grants will be available to cover up to \$25,000 for organizational needs. Capital Equipment and Facility Upgrades Grants for amounts up to \$500,000 will offer meaningful financial support for significant equipment investments.

"It is important that we support innovative Maryland businesses that seek a dominant position in the offshore wind supply chain with products that challenge the established European market," said Director Hopper. "It is our hope that with MEA's help these burgeoning companies will develop competencies and become invaluable assets to Maryland's clean energy economy and the global offshore wind supply chain."

For more information about this RFP, please visit: <http://energy.maryland.gov/annandbids.html>

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The mission of the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) is to promote affordable, reliable, clean energy. MEA's programs and policies help lower energy bills, fuel the creation of green collar jobs, address environmental and climate impacts, and promote energy independence.